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SUBJECT: FIRST ISSUE OF DOMINICAN MFA'S POLICY MAGAZINE
EXAMINES BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH HAITI

¶1. Summary: Haiti is the focus of the Dominican Republic's first number of a new foreign policy review released at the close of 2005. Among texts are President Leonel Fernandez's speech at a seminar where he presented his priorities for the border region and other quasi-official statements. The Dominican official strategy for the cross-border relationship includes developing the border region both physically and socially, addressing Haitian migration through continued repatriations, and calling on the international community to take responsibility for Haiti. End summary.

¶2. Haiti, its problems, and its effect on the Dominican Republic are issues that have been on the steady rise in the Dominican Republic since May of 2005 and now stand at the forefront of Dominican domestic and foreign policy. Haiti and the "Haitian issue" make press headlines daily, and at the close of 2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released its first foreign policy review, which it dedicated to Haiti and the crisis that has led Haiti to become a "failed state". The design of the first number is striking, featuring a color photograph, wrapping from front cover to back, of the grim yellow-orange gates at the Dajabon border crossing, with a crowd of Haitian faces waiting stoically for the opening.

¶3. A note from the editor explains that this quarterly journal is a reflection of the issues of highest interest and relevance to the Dominican Republic's foreign policy. The journal will include professional, academic, social, cultural, economic and political analysis, as well as articles and speeches by Dominican authorities.

OFFICIAL POLICY

¶4. Official policy presented in various documents may be summarized as follows:
The deterioration of the security situation in Haiti has created an environment more open to alien smuggling, drugs, arms, and human trafficking. As these factors threaten national security, the Dominican authorities stress several aims:

-- Develop the border region both physically and socially. Through the creation of the Provincial Development Consultative Council, authorities have now identified the priorities for the region that the government can take on immediately. The Council should be proactive and seek technical support from international organization to support longer-term development goals that are sustainable. Its initiatives should also link the government to private sector, civil society, and the international community.

-- Continue repatriations with appropriate respect to human rights. Historically the Dominican Republic has lacked a just and humane migration policy toward Haiti. President

Fernandez considers that mass repatriations violate human rights. At the same time, he stresses that the Dominican Republic has a sovereign right to protect its territorial integrity and repatriate all foreigners who enter the country illegally. This a right that is not up for discussion.

-- Continue to call on the international community for support. Haiti cannot do it alone and the international community should assume responsibility with respect to Haiti that will help strengthen democratic institutions, stimulate economic growth, and respond to its social problems.

-- Carry out a National Census of Foreigners. The National Council of Migration, established in the 2004 Migration Law, proposes to conduct a census of foreigners, with the proposal to provide residence documentation for those already in the country for more than 10 years.

-- Reinforcing Border Protection. Security forces are working to develop a plan for better enforcement of the border and are carrying out studies to determine points that are most vulnerable.

-- Demarcating the Border. Haiti and the Dominican Republic signed an agreement to reconstruct the damaged and lost markers that establish the line dividing the two countries. This work remains to be accomplished.

-- Reactivating a Bi-national Mixed Commission. This mechanism will serve as a permanent venue for discussion and debate of the bilateral agenda.

-- Provide More Resources for Diplomacy. Strengthening the MFA Division of Haitian affairs will reinforce its role as a unit that links together government agencies to coordinate issues related to Haiti.

14. Other works presented in the foreign policy review include:

-- Historic Perspective of Dominican-Haitian Relations by economist, historian, and former Ambassador to the United States Bernardo Vega. An erudite but engaging review of the bilateral relationship, including apt and evocative historical and literary quotes. Vega discusses Trujillo's ambivalence toward Haitian leaders and stresses the breakdown of the government-to-government system of contracting Haitian laborers for sugar harvests and then repatriating them.

-- The changes in Haitian Immigration and the Dispute over the Numbers. Two sociologists do the numbers: the estimates of the resident Haitian population range from 250,000 to 2 million. Over the past two decades, the number has become difficult to determine. Crisis in Haiti has pushed individuals across the border and demand for labor in the Dominican Republic has pulled them. Following the 1991 coup in Haiti, bilateral control arrangements fell apart, flows increased, and Haitian laborers became important in coffee, tobacco, and banana industries. The majority of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent are undocumented. The Migration Directorate has records of only 416,737 Haitians living in the country as of 2003, a figure likely to be very far from the undetermined actual population.

-- Chronology of the Political Crisis in Haiti by Ambassador Inocencio Garcia, head of MFA Haitian Affairs. Factual account of the official view.

-- Haitian Migration in the Dominican Republic: New Dimensions to an Old Problem by sociologist and academic Jose de Castillo. Growth of the undocumented population, as individuals responded to a wide array of economic incentives.

--Advantages and Disadvantages of a Commercial Integration Between the Dominican Republic and Haiti by economists Rolando Reyes and Adolfo Marti. Theoretical tract.

15. The journal concludes with a summary of related MFA activities. Embassy has sent a copy of the journal to the Department's Ralph Bunche Library.

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